



# *Information for Parents P7-S1 Handbook 2018/19*

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A warm welcome to Balerno High School



## **Balerno High School**

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**Headteacher: Neil McCallum**





*Dear Parents,*

*It is my pleasure, as headteacher, to welcome you to our school.*

*Over the years, we have established a reputation for providing our pupils with an educational experience which is effective, enjoyable, and rewarding. Our curriculum is designed to be academically challenging, stimulating and appropriate to our pupils' abilities, aptitudes and aspirations.*

*We are continuously developing our teaching approaches to take account of educational research and innovation, in line with the expectations inherent in our national curriculum. We also aim to ensure that our students continue to receive a first class preparation for life beyond school.*

*In this handbook we have included a range of information about the school and attempted to answer some of the questions which are often asked by parents when their children are moving on from primary to secondary school.*

*As you read through our handbook, I hope that you will gain a flavour of the ethos and educational aims of Balerno High School. We firmly believe that there are many qualities which bring success in life; academic achievement is but one of them. Our pupils are encouraged to adopt and value qualities such as tolerance, compassion, cooperation, good manners, reliability, enthusiasm and determination.*

*We seek to build a genuine partnership between school staff, pupils, parents and the wider community, in which all are recognised, valued and treated with respect.*

*By working in partnership with our pupils and parents, we believe that we can achieve these aims and that our pupils, your children, will enjoy their time in our school, achieve success and feel confident to face the many challenges and opportunities which they will encounter in life, when they leave to make their way in the wide world.*

*Welcome to Balerno High School.*

*Neil McCallum  
Headteacher*

*June 2018*

## Our Educational Aims

- To provide a rigorous and challenging education within a disciplined environment for all our pupils.
- To promote the values of inclusion and citizenship.
- To sustain a caring ethos, responsive to individual needs and based on mutual respect.
- To help each pupil develop through a well-rounded education which includes cultural, creative and sporting activities.
- To promote education as an active partnership between providers and users and to continue to develop our partnership with the wider community.
- To encourage all staff to develop their professional abilities to the highest level.
- To create a school environment which is embracing and supportive to a positive self image.
- To promote the good name and reputation of Balerno High School for the benefit of everyone involved with the school.





# Curriculum and the Learning Experience

S1 pupils are organised into one of five tutor groups/non-practical classes and one of eight practical classes. The practical set classes have a maximum size of 20. The majority of classes in S1 will be mixed ability.

Classes are created based on information gathered from primary schools about the attainment and progress of each individual pupil. When relevant, this information is shared with class teachers so that individual needs are met.

The main difference in the design of the curriculum for S1 pupils is the delivery through specific subject areas. Pupils will find that the learning approaches used in classrooms across the subjects are very similar to those used in primary. At times, subjects also work together to deliver learning through interdisciplinary projects which will, again, be familiar to pupils just out of primary school. In S1 the following range of subjects is experienced:

## **Non-Practical Subjects**

English  
Mathematics  
French and Spanish  
Social Subjects (Geography, History, Modern Studies)  
Physical Education  
Religious and Moral Education  
Drama  
Personal and Social Education

## **Practical Subjects (Maximum class size is 20)**

Science  
Computing Studies  
Craft, Design and Technology  
Art and Design  
Home Economics  
Music  
Business Education

## **Assessment and Reporting**

The aim within each of the subject areas is to build on the learning from primary school. Pupil progress is monitored and assessed by teachers using a range of different approaches and teachers regularly discuss with pupils how well they have done. Teachers will describe the Learning Intentions of individual lessons and longer blocks of teaching; pupils should know exactly what they will be able to say, write or do to show success in their learning. Pupils are also directly involved in assessing their own progress in dialogue with class teachers. As a parent you can have a role in discussing with your child how they feel they are progressing by asking about the Learning Intentions and Success Criteria being delivered in each subject area.

As a school we will provide you with two reports from class teachers during the course of the year. The first is a short Monitoring and Tracking report to let you know how they have settled into S1 and the second is a full report towards the end of the first session. You will also have the opportunity to attend a Parent's Meeting to meet individual class teachers and discuss your child's progress. However, as a school we would urge you to contact the school through the appropriate Pupil Support Leader to discuss your child's progress at any time during the year, whether it is to check up or, even more importantly, if you have a concern.

## **Ready to Learn**

All pupils should come to school ready to learn. They should bring a school bag with relevant jotters for the day, a pencil case, their homework diary (which we will provide at the start of term) and any specific equipment e.g. PE kit. If you have any difficulties providing this, please contact your child's Pupil Support Leader who will work with you to ensure your child has the correct equipment.

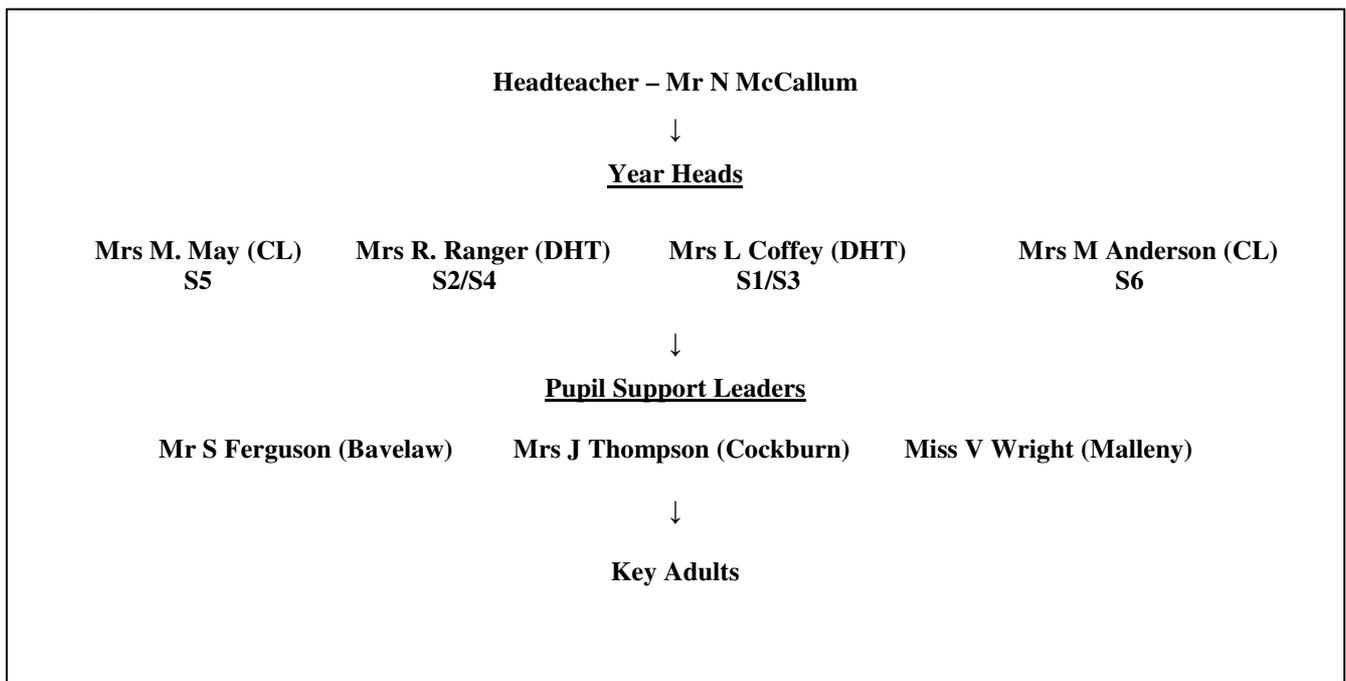


# Pupil Support

## Guidance Structure

The school is divided into three Houses: Bavelaw, Cockburn and Malleny. In each House there is a Pupil Support Leader (PSL) who provides support and guidance for all the pupils in the House. All pupils belong to one of these Houses and remain in it for the duration of their school life. Members of the same family are usually placed in the same House. In this way continuity in the relationship between the guidance staff, pupils and parents is assured.

Two Deputy Headteachers and two experienced Curriculum Leaders also form part of the support team, acting as year heads with overall responsibility for guidance, curricular, and discipline matters for year groups. Our Guidance Structure is described below:



Key Adults meet with their class most days. They take time to get to know the pupils and help them to set and work towards individual targets in their learning.

Where possible, key adults and year heads follow the year group through their time in school.



# Communication with parents

The school aims to establish and maintain a regular and close relationship with parents regarding all aspects of their child's development. Much of the general contact with school (e.g. school communications, letters etc.) will, in the first instance, be through PSLs, emails, texts and the school website. Many departments also use Twitter to share daily successes.

Parents will, of course, receive annual written progress reports for their child and we encourage you to attend parents' evenings. In addition, Curriculum Leaders may communicate by telephone or letter if they are concerned about a pupil's progress in their subject. With this in mind, please do ensure that you update us if your contact details change.

PSLs and Curriculum Leaders have a responsibility for the monitoring of pupil's progress and will inform parents at an early stage of any concerns they might have, either curricular or pastoral. They will also welcome the opportunity to meet parents individually to discuss any matters of concern relating to their child. As all staff have a teaching commitment, parents are asked to make appointments for such meetings.

The support team regularly meets with pupils, parents and partner agencies and operates within the guidelines and advice from City of Edinburgh Council to plan opportunities for pupil success in learning and achievement. Where relevant, the school works closely with other agencies such as Educational Psychology, Social Work and others.

## **Residential Trip**

The transition process is supported by our residential week for all S1 in September and the opportunity to engage in the Junior Award Scheme Scotland (JASS) which we deliver at the Gold level throughout first and second year. This allows those pupils who have completed the Bronze or Silver in primary to continue and those new to the scheme to also achieve the Gold Award. We strongly encourage all pupils to attend this and ask that you contact us if there are any barriers to your child attending; we would like to provide support wherever possible.

## **Support for Learning**

The Support for Learning Department works with any pupil who requires additional support to allow them to access the secondary curriculum and be included in the life of the school. The department consists of dedicated Support for Learning teachers and several Pupil Support Assistants. A number of S6 pupils also work with the department to enhance the learning of younger pupils.

Additional needs can arise at any time in a pupil's education. Liaison with pupils, their teachers, parents and outside agencies is an essential part of identifying needs and targeting support to enable a pupil to progress and experience success. Important information transfers when a pupil moves from primary to secondary school but needs can be identified later in their school career. Parents are welcome to contact the department at any time if they have a concern about their child's learning.



# The School Day - Practicalities

## The School Week

School starts at 8.30 and finishes at 3.30 Monday to Thursday, 12.30pm on a Friday. A warning bell rings at 8.25 to remind pupils that it is time to make their way to class. All pupils should be at their period 1 classroom by 8.30.

<b>Monday</b>	<b>8.30 – 9.20</b>	<b>9.20 – 10.10</b>	<b>10.10 – 10.20</b>	<b>10.20 – 11.10</b>	<b>11.10 – 11.25</b>	<b>11.25 – 12.15</b>	<b>12.15 – 13.05</b>	<b>13.05 – 13.50</b>	<b>13.50 – 14.40</b>	<b>14.40 – 15.30</b>
			Tutor Time		Break			Lunch		
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>8.30 – 9.20</i>	<i>9.20 – 10.10</i>	<i>10.10 – 11.00</i>		<i>11.00 – 11.20</i>	<i>11.20 – 12.10</i>	<i>12.10 – 13.00</i>	<i>13.00 – 13.50</i>	<i>13.50 – 14.40</i>	<i>14.40 – 15.30</i>
					Break			Lunch		
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>8.30 – 9.20</b>	<b>9.20 – 10.10</b>	<b>10.10 – 10.20</b>	<b>10.20 – 11.10</b>	<b>11.10 – 11.25</b>	<b>11.25 – 12.15</b>	<b>12.15 – 13.05</b>	<b>13.05 – 13.50</b>	<b>13.50 – 14.40</b>	<b>14.40 – 15.30</b>
			Tutor Time		Break			Lunch		
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>8.30 – 9.20</b>	<b>9.20 – 10.10</b>	<b>10.10 – 10.20</b>	<b>10.20 – 11.10</b>	<b>11.10 – 11.25</b>	<b>11.25 – 12.15</b>	<b>12.15 – 13.05</b>	<b>13.05 – 13.50</b>	<b>13.50 – 14.40</b>	<b>14.40 – 15.30</b>
			Tutor Time		Break			Lunch		
<i>Friday</i>	<i>8.30 – 9.20</i>	<i>9.20 – 10.10</i>	<i>10.10 – 10.30</i>	<i>10.30 – 11.20</i>		<i>11.20 – 11.40</i>	<i>11.40 – 12.30</i>			
			Break			Tutor Time				

Please be aware that these times are new for all of us this session. Reassure your child that we will all be trying to get used to it at the same time!

## School Uniform

As a school we believe it is important that all our pupils follow our policy on school uniform. While we do not want school uniform to become an area of conflict between staff and pupils we strongly encourage our pupils to identify with the school and our aims. The wearing of school uniform is a tangible demonstration of this commitment. We also want to discourage any competition between pupils over expensive trainers or designer jeans.

- Our pupils should be proud to belong to Balerno High School.
- They should also understand the importance of a smart appearance and being dressed appropriately for schoolwork.
- School uniform sets the correct tone for the working day.
- Pupils wearing school uniform helps to identify intruders.

### Our school uniform is as follows:

Blazer  
 White Shirt / Blouse  
 School Tie  
 Black V-neck Sweater or knitwear item

Black skirt / dress trousers (not tracksuit trousers, leggings, jeans or chinos)  
Black shoes (not trainers)  
No head wear unless for religious reasons

Pupils should also bring a school bag with all necessary books and equipment.

Our recommended supplier for blazers is Aitken and Niven on 0131 477 3922. Ties are available from the school office.

### **Sportswear for the PE department and sports field**

- School T-shirt or polo shirt or a plain, self-coloured one in navy/white/black
- Shorts, plain, self-coloured in navy / white / black
- School sweatshirt or plain, self-coloured in navy / black
- Plain self-coloured track suit bottoms or jogging bottoms in navy / black
- Training shoes suitable for outdoors and indoors
- Swimsuit or swim trunks

### **School Meals**

Within the school there is a cafeteria, the Riverside Café, which provides a wide choice of items individually priced from a varied and seasonal menu. All dishes are prepared on the premises and the catering staff subscribe to the Healthy Eating policy.

The standard price of a two-course school meal is currently £2.50.

Packed lunches may be consumed at the picnic benches in the concourse.

The school operates a 'cashless' catering service. Each pupil is allocated a pin number on to which cash or cheques can be loaded. There is also a biometrics option; more information on this will follow in August. This system ensures anonymity for free school meal pupils, less cash being carried by pupils and a speedier service in the cafeteria. In addition, reports can be provided to parents on their child's purchases.

Please note that we do not permit our new S1 pupils to leave the school for break and lunch until after the residential.

### **Homework**

We are currently revising our homework policy and will share this with you as soon as we can. Please encourage your child to read regularly and continue to take opportunities to incorporate literacy and numeracy skills into everyday life.

### **Transport – Local Authority Provision**

City of Edinburgh Council provides free transport to and from school for pupils if the child is **attending their catchment school** and the distance of their main residence from school is over

- three miles for secondary school.

We also provide transport if you live within these limits and your child has a medical condition that prevents them from walking to school.

We do not consider parents' income, health or circumstances. If you have chosen to move your child to a non-catchment school or you move out of the catchment area, you will be responsible for travel arrangements.

## Transport Arrangements for Balerno High School Pupils

- Buses will pick up pupils in Kirknewton and Ratho each morning and take them to school for the start of the school day. Other pupils entitled to travel will be picked up along the route. A further bus will collect pupils from agreed points in rural areas.
- All buses will run according to fixed timetables and the times will be notified to parents at the start of each session.
- All pupils will be expected to behave in a manner in keeping with the safety, comfort and security of all travelling, as well as that of other road users.
- Parents will be expected to give their full support to the school, local authority and bus company in their joint pursuit of safety and good discipline on all journeys.
- Pupils who repeatedly or seriously misbehave on school buses may have their bus pass withdrawn on a temporary or permanent basis.
- Although the school has only a minor role in the provision of school transport, we are always pleased to receive observations or comments from parents, and will do all in our power to assist. Complaints regarding the quality or reliability of the service, however, should be directed to the relevant provider.

## Financial Assistance

City of Edinburgh Council provides children from low income families with free school meals and vouchers to help towards buying school clothes. Young people over the age of 16 staying on at school and living on their own may also apply.

You can find out if you are entitled to assistance on:

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20183/food\\_and\\_clothing/392/free\\_school\\_meals\\_and\\_help\\_with\\_school\\_wear](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20183/food_and_clothing/392/free_school_meals_and_help_with_school_wear).

Applications for the next school year, starting August 2018, will open in June. Please do not use the current application form.

The school is keen to support families in attending extra-curricular activities and excursions. Please contact us if financial cost is likely to be a barrier to your child's involvement.

## And finally...

We hope that your child has a successful school career at Balerno High School. We look forward to working in partnership with you as parents/carers to do all we can to ensure that this happens.